

JANUARY 25, 1817.

Read twice and committed to the committee of the whole House on
the bill "concerning the navigation of the United States."

A Bill

*To amend the act "for the government and regulation of seamen in
the merchant service, and for the relief of distressed and destitute
American seamen in foreign ports."*

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of*
2 *the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That if*
3 any seamen or mariner who shall have subscribed the contract
4 mentioned and described in the first section of the act passed
5 on the twentieth July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety,
6 entitled, "An act for the government and regulation of seamen
7 in the merchant service," shall absent himself from on board
8 the ship or vessel in which he shall so have shipped, for the
9 space of forty-eight hours, at any time before the departure of
10 the said ship or vessel on the voyage, without leave of the mas-
11 ter, or officer commanding on board, such seamen shall forfeit
12 to the use of the owners all the wages that may then be due
13 him ; and if he shall absent himself at any time after leaving

14 the United States, in a foreign port, for the space of forty-eight
 15 hours without leave as aforesaid, he shall forfeit to the United
 16 States all the wages that may be due him, together with all the
 17 goods and chattels he may have on board the said ship or ves-
 18 sel; and the said wages, goods, and chattels, shall be duly ac-
 19 counted for, on oath, by the master of the said ship or vessel,
 20 to the collector of the customs at the first port of entry at which
 21 the vessel may arrive on its return to the United States; and
 22 it shall be the duty of the said collector to issue duplicate re-
 23 ceipts for the wages and goods so accounted for, to the master
 24 of the said ship or vessel, whose duty it shall be to transmit
 25 one copy thereof without delay to the Secretary of the Trea-
 26 sury.

1 SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That all sums so received
 2 by the collector of the customs shall be accounted for with the
 3 Treasury Department quarter yearly, and the amount thereof
 4 carried to the credit of the fund for the relief and protection
 5 of destitute American seamen. And the said collectors shall
 6 receive for their services two and a half per centum upon the
 7 amount they may respectively receive and account for with the
 8 Treasury Department as aforesaid.

1 SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That if it shall appear
 2 that higher wages were necessarily given in a foreign port to
 3 replace the seaman or mariner who had so deserted, than had
 4 been given to the deserter, it shall be the duty of the collector

5 of the customs to deduct such difference from the amount of
6 forfeited wages, and to receive the remainder only.

1 **SEC. 4.** *And be it further enacted,* That if any master or
2 commander of a vessel belonging to a citizen of the United
3 States, shall pay to the consul, vice-consul, commercial agent,
4 or vice-commercial agent, on the discharge of any of his crew
5 in a foreign port, three months wages, as required by the third
6 section of the act passed twenty-eighth February, one thou-
7 sand eight hundred and three, entitled, "An act supplementary
8 to the act concerning consuls and vice-consuls and for the fur-
9 ther protection of American seamen," it shall be the duty of
10 the consul, vice consul, &c. to give to the master or commander
11 duplicate receipts for the same, one of which the said master
12 or commander shall transmit to the Secretary of the Treasury
13 immediately after his return to the United States. And if any
14 master or commander, on the discharge of all or any of his
15 crew, in a foreign port, shall refuse or neglect to pay to the
16 consul, &c. the three months wages, required by the act above
17 alluded to, he shall forfeit and pay to the use of the United
18 States, one hundred and fifty dollars for each seaman so dis-
19 charged; and the certificate of any such consul, &c. given
20 under his hand and official seal, shall be *prima facie* evidence
21 of such refusal or neglect, in any court of law having jurisdic-
22 tion for the recovery of the penalty aforesaid. And in case
23 there should be no consul, or vice-consul, at the port where

24 the seamen are discharged, then the captain of the vessel shall
25 pay the said extra wages to the consul at the next port where
26 he may arrive, if there be one ; and if there be no consul at
27 any of the ports which he may visit, then he shall pay such
28 extra wages to the collector of the port to which he may return.